July, 30, 2008

International Teaching Center,

Dear and beloved Friends,

The following is a report of my recent trip to Egypt which started on July, 23, 2008 and lasted through July, 28, 2008.

On Wednesday, the 23rd of July, I had a joint meeting with the Core Group and the Auxiliary Board Member, during which I conveyed to the gathering friends the warm regards of your august body, and the news of the 10th international convention held in the Holy Land last May. As well, I presented the main purpose of my trip which is to have an institutional meeting to study the last chapter (Acceleration of Learning) of the document (Attaining the Dynamics of Growth), and have a reflective group discussion on the workings of the Institute Process and the progress of the Four Lines of Action in Egypt.
It was decided that an institutional meeting be held in Cairo on Friday the 25th of July with the Core Group, Auxiliary Board Member, Institute coordinators, assistants, and External Affairs members attending.

Mrs. Eman Al-Masry, a Baha'i from the U.S.A attended a part of the meeting, as she is visiting Egypt as a resource person for about two and a half months lasting through the end of next September. She presented her plan to conduct study circles and a children class for non-Baha'i friends, as well as many social visits to her and her families' friends in order to strengthen their relationships and have discussions in matters that might bring up the Cause. I commended her highly appreciated efforts, and asked her to be in contact with the Auxiliary Board Member and/or assistants. At the same time, I suggested to her the importance of involving a number of Baha'i friends who are residing in Egypt in her activities, so that the activities she starts do continue after she leaves Egypt.

At the meeting, the Core Group explained the progress made on publishing a Baha'i book with one of the publishers in Egypt. The book (Path to Future: A Baha'i View) introduces the Baha'i Faith and its principles to the public. The Core

Group indicated that the book is expected to be published within the next few days. And, indeed, it was out on stands by Friday the 25th of July. The Core Group, kindly, provided me with a complimentary copy, and of course copies will be sent to the UHJ.

I discussed with the Core Group the letter of the Department of the Secretariat to the Office of Persian and Arab Affairs on June, 10, 2008 regarding the wish of Hajj Salama Abdel-Hamid Mohamed al-Sharqawi who is an Egyptian Muslim, to learn about the Baha'i Faith in detail. The Core Group indicated that Mr. Sharqawi is already in touch with two Baha'is in Egypt other than Mr. Hussein Saif who at the beginning contacted him at the request of the Core Group. The Core explained that the two friends are in regular contact with Mr. Sharqawi, and he is learning more about the Faith.

The Institutional Meeting was held on Friday the 25th of July, for about eight hours. We studied the chapter (Acceleration of Learning), and the attendants participated in explored the concepts and ideas presented in the document and reflected on their experience in Egypt, and the ways and means to apply as many of the concepts in the field.

The discussion was constructive and mature. I felt that great progress have been achieved in the understanding of the friends regarding the dynamics of the Institute Process and the spiritual enterprise we are working on. The participants discussed and explained how learning is taking place in the field pointing to a number of cases wherein non-Baha'i friends are participating in the Lines of Action. The friends talked, as well, about the challenges in the field and how they overcomed many of them, and still are working to overcome some others. I participated in the discussion, indicating that the Universal House of Justice expects much greater victories in Egypt as the ground is fertile for the advancement of the Cause, and the receptive souls are waiting for us, assuring them at the same time of the ardent prayers of the UHJ for them and their friends.

I had three more meetings with the friends: one in Alexandria, another with the Baha'i youth of Metropolitan Cairo, and a third meeting with the friends in PortSa'id they were held on Thursday 24th, Saturday 26th, and Sunday 27th respectively. Each meeting was attended by 40-45 of the

friends. During them I displayed the DVD (Attaining the Dynamics of Growth), and tried to convey to the best of my ability the spirit of activity and victories around the world. At the same time, many questions were asked by the attendants, especially in PortSa'id. The questions ranged from Baha'i laws to Administration to the Institute Process. I conveyed the warm regards of the UHJ and ITC, and concentrated on the importance of regularly studying individually as well as collectively the messages and documents of the UHJ and the ITC, so as to remain focused on the aim of the spiritual plans extending through 2021, emphasizing at the same time the spiritual nature of the International plans.

I felt deeply for the dear friends, especially the youth, for their steadfastness and sincere willingness to serve the Beloved Faith. I sensed the difficulties they are facing as a result of withholding the identity card by the civil authorities in Egypt. I extended my compassion and encouragement, expressing at the same time the vision of the UHJ regarding the Institute process in Egypt and the importance of reaching the thousands upon thousands of receptive souls waiting for the servants of Baha'u'llah.

I had another meeting with the Core Group and the Auxiliary Board Member on Friday the 25th, in which we discussed the progress of the Four Lines of Action in Egypt. The data for the cycle ending June, 30, 2008 were as follows:

Item	30/3/08	Target 30/6/08	30/6/08
Tutors	175	200	175
Active Tutors	42	70	45
Active families	34	55	38
**Seekers	125	206	143
Family Groups	14	18	12

SEEKERS**

Item	30/3/08	Target 30/6/08	30/6/08
Seekers-SC	71	83	73
Seekers-JY	12	35	22
Seekers-DM	21	45	27
Seekers-CC	21	43	21
Total	**125**	**206**	**143**

Five friends declared their faith in Baha'u'llah over the last cycle, which raises the total number of declarations since the beginning of the projects to 47 persons.

We discussed the figures above which indicate a progress in all the areas of activity. However, none of them met the targeted plans. We talked about the different aspects of the activity and the present challenges and how to overcome them, in order to explore and materialize the great potentialities for teaching the word of Baha'u'llah in Egypt.

The Auxiliary Board member explained that the number of Family Groups was decided to remain without any increase during the last cycle even though the target was to increase them, as there were no more families that qualify as (Active or potentially active) to be included in new Groups. At the same time, two of the existing Groups were dismantled, one because some families left the localities concerned, and the other because the families in question were not enthusiastic enough, and working with them was exhausting the limited available resources.

The attending friends pointed to One important and apparent challenge which was the low percentage of the Youth participating in the Four Lines of Action. After some discussion, It was decided to have a meeting with the Youth and the Core Group and the Auxiliary Board member to listen to the Youth and try to discuss with them how to activate their participation in the Process. The friends talked as well about the importance for the Youth in Egypt to attend Baha'i courses and workshops, associating at the same time with their colleagues from other neighboring countries. The friends explained that as most of the youth do not have passports, and will not have any, until the matter be resolved by the civil authorities, they suggested that a Baha'i progamme or two be held annually in Egypt with Baha'i youth from a number of Arab countries participating.

The attending friends talked as well about the positive cultural changes occurring within the community as a result of the spiritual plan at hand. They indicated that the community for decades was closed to the outside world "protecting" its identity as Baha'is, whereas, today we are four years into a totally different culture requiring total "openness" to the outer community, and teaching the words of Baha'u'llah

to receptive Egyptians, with new concepts and attitudes entailing. They indicated that much progress have been made over the last four years, and many great challenges have been overcome, and the community is determined to keep working on itself, understanding that the only way to succeed is to follow the guidance of the UHJ.

I indicated to the Core Group and the Auxiliary Board Member that the UHJ expects much more from the dear friends in Egypt. And, taking into consideration all the present challenges, we have to work hard to reach to the thousands of souls waiting for us. We talked at the meeting about the dear friends in Iran, and the marvelous example they give to the Baha'i world in steadfastness and spiritual vision to reach to the masses. We reflected upon the idea that the dear friends in Egypt with their history of steadfastness and certitude can and should explore all its great potentialities giving an example to the Baha'is in the region and the world.

We discussed the importance of utilizing the efforts and capabilities of the resource persons and pioneers who will visit the country from time to time in order to participate in the collective endeavor taking place to reach out to the natives. It was apparent that the efforts of the resource persons who visited Egypt over the last couple of years had their positive effects in terms of more activity in the Lines of Action. We discussed the many aspects of dealing with this aspect of field work and its administration, and the learning it entails as well.

Finally, we discussed next targets for the Four Lines of Action for this cycle ending on September, 30, 2008 and the following cycle ending December, 31, 2008. The following tables portray the goals targeted:

Item	30/9/08	31/12/08
Tutors	190	200
Active Tutors	57	70
Active families	46	55
**Seekers	190	233

Seekers**

Item	30/9/08	31/12/08
Seekers-SC	83	90
Seekers-JY 6	35	50
Seekers-DM 6	40	50
Seekers-CC 6	32	43
Total	**190**	**233**

. Finally, I would like to convey the hope of the dear friends in Egypt that prayers be offered on their behalf in the Holy Shrines.

With warm and loving greetings,

Fadel Ardakani